

## LABOR CAUCUS LAUDS WHITE HOUSE

Thursday, October 27 2005

Washington, D.C. – The House Labor and Working Families Caucus praised President Bush's decision today to reinstate workers' rights protections for those working in the Gulf region on November 8th. The House Labor and Working Families Caucus Co-Chairs, Representatives Michael H. Michaud (ME-2), Stephen F. Lynch (MA-9), and Linda Sanchez (CA-39) have been working closely with their House colleagues to reverse the September decision made by the and to ensure that workers' rights and wages are protected under the Davis-Bacon Act.

Washington, D.C. – The House Labor and Working Families Caucus praised President Bush's decision today to reinstate workers' rights protections for those working in the Gulf region on November 8th. The House Labor and Working Families Caucus Co-Chairs, Representatives Michael H. Michaud (ME-2), Stephen F. Lynch (MA-9), and Linda Sanchez (CA-39) have been working closely with their House colleagues to reverse the September decision made by the and to ensure that workers' rights and wages are protected under the Davis-Bacon Act.

"There has been a mighty effort by workers and Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle to help workers in the devastated region have the fair wage protections needed to recover," Michaud said. "This is not a political issue. It's been a worker protection issue. President Bush has been forced to pay attention and take notice. The news today is a positive step forward in the region's recovery."

Congressman Lynch said, "After visiting the Gulf Coast region and reviewing the devastation and despair, I was absolutely stunned that the first act of the president was to take executive action to cut the federal wage supports for people in Mississippi and Louisiana. I thought to myself, if my house was under twenty feet of water, is that what I'd really need? I talked with a lot of folks in Louisiana and Mississippi when I was down there after Katrina. A lot of people were asking for help in finding lost relatives, trying to get clean water, trying to get the power back on. I have to admit, not one person asked me to cut their wages. I have to ask, "what was the president thinking". I'm happy he came to his senses and changed his mind. This was just a bald attempt to help his pals at the ABC take advantage of an emergency in order to generate profits. It was disgraceful to begin with, especially because wages are pretty low there already. I guess it showed what this President and his pals are all about. It's about time that the Bush Administration did something right."

"I am very pleased that President Bush finally relented and reinstated Davis-Bacon, almost two months after he first suspended it. The President's bad judgment and

refusal to reinstate Davis-Bacon the last two months resulted in lost jobs and wages for hard-working people in the Gulf Coast who were displaced by low-paid out-of-state workers. I hope that this action will give a boost to the hundreds of thousands of workers in the Gulf Region who are rebuilding their lives and communities," said Congresswoman Linda Sanchez.

Recently, Education and the Workforce Ranking Member George Miller introduced a Joint Resolution (H.J.Res 69) that would have forced the House to vote by early November on whether or not to allow the wage cut to stand. This action, in part, spurred the White House to make the rescission announcement today.

In September, the Labor Caucus sent a joint letter condemning President Bush's rescission of the Davis-Bacon Act, requesting an immediate reversal of the decision. The executive order allowed federal contractors rebuilding in the Hurricane Katrina-ravaged areas of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi to pay workers at rates below the prevailing wage. The caucus has been actively working with House leadership and labor unions to reinstate these protections.

The Davis-Bacon law requires federal contractors to pay its workers at least the prevailing wage on construction projects, including highways, buildings, and bridges. On September 8th, President Bush suspended the requirements of the Davis-Bacon law for designated areas hit by the storm.

###